

FREEMASONRY  
AND  
JEWISH EMANCIPATION

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

The decomposition of the European peoples and states by Jewry is one of the greatest and most epidemic-like diseases of the last centuries, the cure and elimination of which is increasingly asserting itself as a political, pan-European program.

This decomposition of European national- and state life is inconceivable without the preparation of Freemasonry. The political experiences of two centuries of German history force the present to the conclusion that Freemasonry has the same significance for the decomposition of the bourgeoisie as Marxism has for the decomposition of the working class.

Today, international Freemasonry seeks to dismiss as a political, scientifically unprovable slander this realization that it forms and has formed the international platform for the political work of Jewry. In its last edition of 1932, the *Internationales Freimaurer-Lexikon*, for example, still claims from this attitude that the “bias of the mass-soul” has necessitated such a “convenient intellectual short-circuit” in order to find a scapegoat — poor persecuted Jewry — for the mostly self-imposed disasters of the nations.

This claim could only be made by Freemasonry as long as the political and scientific public was denied access to the deeds, files, and documents in its archives and the use of the nearly 60,000 volumes of literature. However, the materials seized after the ban on the Lodge system in Germany provide clear evidence of how Jews were given access to the German people via the Lodges and how Freemasonry thus took on the role of pacemaker of Jewish emancipation.

It will now be the primary scientific and political task to pick out from the wealth of existing problems concerning the relationship between Jewry and Freemasonry the issue of the Freemasonic emancipation of Jewry and to substantiate it historically.

First of all, it must be emphasized that due to the inaccessibility of Freemasonic material to date, the existing academic works have considered the problem of Jewish emancipation solely and therefore too strongly from the intellectual preparation of the Enlightenment and the impact of the humanity- and tolerance ideas. Previous research has not sufficiently taken into account the enormous assistance that Freemasonry provided to Jewry in its endeavors to achieve civil equality.

This facilitation of Jewish emancipation by Freemasonry is evidenced by two processes that will become clear in the following: firstly, by the spiritual and ideological preparation on the basis of the Freemasonic fundamental law, the so-called “Ancient Duties,” and secondly, by the social and political equality resulting from the admission of Jews to the Lodges.



## I. THE FREEMASONIC MANIFESTO



he triumphal procession that Freemasonry embarked on in Europe a few decades after its emergence can only be understood from the spiritual constitution of its birth country: England. After some time of grueling religious wars and protracted dogmatic battles, a spiritual movement had broken out in the Enlightenment, the most important aspect of which is the spiritual affinity with Freemasonry. To the same extent that the new ideas and the new spirit of science penetrated the circles of bourgeois society, Freemasonry endeavored to unite the bearers of these ideas more firmly through its propaganda in order to bind them irrevocably to the ideologies of humanity and tolerance in the Lodges.

A few years after the founding of the Grand Lodge of London in 1717, when the Presbyterian preacher James Anderson published the so-called Constitution Book<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the Brethren and wrote the fundamental law on the moral and ideological principles of Freemasonry in its most important part, the “Ancient Duties,” the idea of a Freemasonic World Alliance based on the Enlightenment was an inevitable consequence. The articles of this Constitution Book already summarized the ideological theses of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons. Containing the History, Charges, Regulations &c. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity. For the Use of the Lodges*, London, 1723. (1<sup>st</sup> edition.) — The Ancient Duties are part of the Constitution Book and contain the ideological and moral foundations of Freemasonry in six main points! — Further editions of the Constitution Book appeared in 1738, 1756, 1767, and 1784, etc. The first German edition, based on the English version of 1723, was published in 1741.

Freemasonry, which in a few years were to take on the significance of an ideological manifesto of Freemasonry.

The core of Freemasonic ideology is contained in the main points I and III of the “Ancient Duties.” The first main point, which clarified the Freemason's position on God and religion, says:

“A Mason is oblig’d by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg’d in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet ’tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves....”<sup>2</sup>

The final section of the third main point continues: “The Persons admitted Members of a Lodge must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report.”<sup>3</sup>

With these parts of the Ancient Duties, the fundamental thesis was expressed that a Freemason was only required to be a man of faith, without taking into account “incidentals” such as religion, fatherland, and status, but at the same time the common historical route with Western liberalism was predetermined by the spiritual kinship. One of the most essential preconditions for the later political effectiveness of Freemasonry is also contained in the concept of religion itself, which the ancients described as the “Religion in which all Men agree.” It expressed the religious system of deism, which displaced Christian dogma in favor of a rational worship of God and active love of philanthropy and thus

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<sup>2</sup> From the English edition of 1723.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit.

corresponded to the spiritual attitude of the higher English classes who formed the first elite of the London Grand Lodge.

This shows that Anderson, like his contemporary Toland,<sup>4</sup> who first advocated the emancipation of the Jews in 1714, coined the concept of tolerance towards non-Christian religions and laid the spiritual foundations for the Freemasonic emancipation of Jewry.

The decisive significance of the Ancient Duties can be seen in the fact that the doctrine of a purely rational world religion was founded in the fundamental law of Freemasonry, and that this itself, as a kind of “heir to the tolerance idea,” became one of the main spiritual carriers of emancipation. The fundamental equality of Jews, as expressed in this ideological manifesto of Freemasonry, was bound to lead to their unconditional acceptance into the Lodges and to their social and civic emancipation. The religious tolerance of Freemasonry opened the doors of the Lodges to the Jews, from which they were to make their way into political life via the salons of bourgeois society.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John Toland, *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland*, 1714.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the principles of humanity and tolerance, however, the existence of and preoccupation with an alien, Jewish-based cult and customs anchored in Freemasonic ritual from the outset made the bourgeoisie united in the Lodges insecure and instinctless against the invading race. People and classes who want to build the temple of mankind and use the symbolism of Solomon’s Temple building to represent it — who understand the Jews’ religion- and God conception, their tribal and moral history as a stage of human higher development, who weave Hebrew words into their customs and make oriental-Jewish legends the basis of their own history — must refrain from rejecting and fighting the bearer and originator of such a world of ideas (Jewry) and from denying it access to the cultural and political life of their own people.



## II. JEWRY IN ENGLISH FREEMASONRY



n the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the members of the Lodges in London were mainly drawn from the supporting classes of the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, and the army,<sup>6</sup> whose social and business connections with the influential Jewish financial power in England prevented Jew phobic attitudes from arising in the Lodges.<sup>7</sup>

The result is the historically significant spectacle that the social emancipation of the Jews in England through the Jewish high finance of Rothschild, Montefiore, and Goldsmid was closely intertwined with Freemasonic emancipation, after Jewry had recognized at an early stage the Freemason Lodges as an important tool for its emancipation endeavors. The Freemasonic Brotherhood offered him the opportunity to come into contact

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<sup>6</sup> A contemporary report from 1732 notes: "During Lord Lovel's presidency, the high nobility considered his presence in the Grand Lodge a point of honor. The Dukes of Norfolk and Richmond, the Earl of Inchiquin, Lord Colerane, and Montagu, with several other distinguished persons, seldom failed to appear...." Quoted from G. Kloss, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in England, Irland und Schottland*, Leipzig, 1847, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> Extensive naturalization and the strong growth of those already settled had given England's Jews a position unknown on the continent at an early stage, which was the cause of the first naturalization attempt in the English Parliament in 1753. The rejection of naturalization led to the baptism of many leading Jewish families, such as Disraeli, Basevi, Ricardo, Bernal, Lopes, and Ximenes, who entered the English high aristocracy as Christians, while other Jewish houses, such as Rothschild, Montefiore, and Goldsmid, who had remained true to their religion, gained an influential position in English society as financial kings.

with the main strata of English society and to penetrate state life in the shadow of the religious tolerance of Freemasonry.

The Jewish names already appearing in the founding years in the Lodge lists of 1723 and 1725 give an idea of the extent and speed of the Jewish flooding of the Lodges.<sup>8</sup> In addition to ordinary members such as Delvalle, Bett, Stainer, Meyer Schamberg, Isaac Schamberg, and Benjamin Da Costa, Jewish financial-princes such as Nathan Meyer Rothschild and Moses Montefiore are mentioned as members of the “Lodge of Emulation” and the “Mount Moriah”<sup>9</sup> Lodge, and in 1732 Salomon Mendez was already listed as a senior Lodge official in the capacity of Grand Tyler. The fact that the Jewish emancipation in England progressed without interruption is evident from the defense pamphlet published around 1788 by a German Freemason, Hans Karl Freiherr von Ecker und Eckhoffen (*Werden und können Israeliten zu Freimaurern aufgenommen werden?*<sup>10</sup>), in which he writes,

“that in the regular English Lodges working according to the English constitution under the Grand Landlodge of London, Israelites, true, respectable Jews professing the faith of their

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<sup>8</sup> In 1732, the Lodge work in Cheapside in “The Rose” [Zur Rose] inn was even moved to Sundays to allow Jewish Lodge members to attend. The Jewish snuff merchant Daniel Delvalle acted as Master. The “Daily Post” of September 22, 1732, writes: “The evening was spent in a manner that did not detract from the Christian Sabbath.”

<sup>9</sup> Lennhoff & Posner, *Internationales Freimaurer-Lexikon*, columns 1055 and 1344. [Sir Moses Montefiore was a leader of British Jewry and a member of the “Mount Moriah” Lodge in London. Meyer Rothschild was made a Freemason in the London “Lodge of Emulation” in 1802.]

<sup>10</sup> Carl Friedr. v. Boscamp, called Lasopolski (i.e. Hans Karl Frhr. von Ecker und Eckhoffen), *Werden und können Israeliten zu Freimaurern aufgenommen werden?*, Hamburg, 1786.

forefathers, are really admitted without objection, and are really recognized by the Grand Lodge of London itself for this, i.e. for true, respectable, free and accepted Masons, who are to be granted entry into all lawful Lodges scattered throughout God's worldbuilding. Thus our Brother residing in Hamburg, the merchant David Moses Herz, an Israelite in the legitimate Caledonian Lodge in London, was himself admitted."<sup>11</sup>

And in another place:

"Not only this Brother Herz, but more Israelites have been united with us through Brother Mason gangs for ages. Some of them have even held official positions at the Grand Lodge in London. In the first half of this century, the list of Deacons or Wardens at the Grand Lodge's Banquets includes some Israelites, such as Isaac Muere, Meyer Schamberg, Benjamin Da Costa, Moses Mendez, Isaac Barrett, Samuel Lowman and so on. In more recent times, the English Freemasons' calendar, published in London from year to year for the use of Brother Masons and bearing the sanction of the Grand Lodge of London, is the best evidence that Jews are still being appointed as officials of the Grand Lodge. Among the Grand Stewards for the years 1781, 1782 and 1784 are Moses Levy, Flemming French, Isaac Lindovice, Thomas Hornsby, etc.

In the other calendars there are so many that I could count, so to speak, an innumerable number of Israeli Brother Masons if the collection were part of my work plan."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., p. 29 f.

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit., p. 34 f.

Over the years, the Jews were accepted in England without hesitation until 1815, when the humanitarian-Jewish-friendly principle was also laid down in the statutes.

The goal of the Jewish community to advance its civic and social equality with the help of England's ruling-class organized in the Lodges was almost achieved in England by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The supremacy that English Freemasonry had secured over the Lodge patents and constitutions of other countries now had to benefit Jewish emancipation efforts in other countries.

The Grand Lodge of England purposefully promoted the spread of Freemasonry on the continent in the following decades. The political leaders of pre-revolutionary France were members of Freemasonic organizations and as such active representatives of the Jewish emancipation on French soil.<sup>13</sup> With the emancipation that took place in France in 1791, the pro-French attitude of the Jewry based in Europe received a strong boost, which in the future willingly accepted the ideas of 1789. This resulted in a two-sided influence on Germany, from France through the armies of the French Revolution, which in the subsequent wars, together with the Freemasonic chain of Brethren, brought the ideas of tolerance to the occupied territories, and from England through the demands

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<sup>13</sup> Beneath the names of Comte de Milly of the Académie des sciences, the lawyer Elie de Beaumont, Guillotin the President of the Chamber of the Provinces, Marquis Lafayette, the encyclopedist d'Alembert, the Abbé Sieyès, the revolutionaries Camille Desmoulins, and Brissot, some of the most active Freemasons present themselves and become the bearers of emancipation alongside other important men of the French Lodges, such as Mirabeau, Beauharnais, Beaumarchais, Joseph de Maistre [see P. Beaudry, *Synarchy Movement of Empire*, 2005], Marquis de Fénélon, the Dukes of Choiseul, Chamfort, Masséna, Beurnonville, Abbé de Chaligny, and Talleyrand.



of the Grand Lodge for the admission and acceptance of Jews in the German Lodges.

